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ABSTRACT

This short document is an historical review of the development of the College for Human Services, a specialized educational institution offering a subsidized two year work study program which prepares adults for careers as new professionals in the human services. The objectives, accomplishments, student and faculty backgrounds and roles, the curriculum, and the sources of financial support are briefly overviewed. (DM)

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THE COLLEGE FOR HUMAN SERVICES

A New Concept in Professional Higher Education for Low-Income Adults

201 Varick Street
New York, New York 10014

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College for Human Services

The College for Human Services, chartered by the Regents of the State of New York in May, 1970, is a specialized educational institution offering a subsidized two-year work-study program which prepares adults for careers as "new professionals" in the human services. This preparation is viewed as the first step in a new kind of educational process which will allow for the establishment of an alternative route into the human service professions.

By opening new paths into higher education and professional careers, the College offers some viable solutions to the serious problems of quality service and educational policy facing society today.

The success of a society must be judged in part by the extent to which it provides all its citizens with basic public services. On this score America, by its own admission, has failed miserably and conditions seem to be getting worse rather than better. Not only the quantity but the quality of service is deteriorating in many of our larger cities, as the supply of professional personnel needed to improve the situation seems never to match the demands. The program of the College for Human Services is an attempt to solve this problem by attacking it on two levels. It offers the students an opportunity to give service while developing their professional skills and, in the process, to increase the effectiveness of all who work in the human services.

By means of an innovative approach which closely coordinates academic study with practical experience, the College offers its students an opportunity to make significant decisions about their lives. By suggesting new patterns of timing, techniques and content, the College serves as a model for a totally new kind of educational institution.

College for Human Services

OBJECTIVES OF THE COLLEGE

The basic objectives of the College for Human Services involve both education and social change. They can be summarized as follows:

1. To educate mature students for careers as new professionals in the human services through a two-year work-study program: students earn a certificate at the completion of the first year, an Associate of Arts degree is awarded upon completion of the second year.

2. To create new jobs and career advancement in the human services for its graduates, thus improving service to the community and providing a new route into the professions.

3. To develop a new kind of professional curriculum in the human services, emphasizing the closest possible relationship between classroom and field work, and creating an interdisciplinary college-level curriculum based on concepts from the social sciences and humanities.

4. To transform human service agencies into education-and-training institutions where students will acquire professional skills at the same time as they perform needed services.

5. To provide a model for the faculty of the future, who will not only use a wide range of teaching techniques to facilitate learning, but will be equally at home in the field and in the classroom.

6. To fully involve students and faculty in policy planning, curriculum development and governance of the College, developing new procedures and mechanisms to this end.

7. To develop linkages with graduate and undergraduate programs at other colleges to allow graduates of the College for Human Services to continue their professional education, further develop their expertise and attain policy-making positions in their fields.

8. To radically alter the credentialling system in the human service professions to facilitate the entry and advancement of new professionals. Efforts are being made to equate the intensive two-year program with a Baccalaureate degree.

9. To develop an independent educational institution that will remain in the vanguard of educational experimentation and achievement.

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Established originally in 1964 as a one-year institute* to train women from low-income neighborhoods in New York City for community service, the College was founded in the belief that a vast reservoir of unused talent exists among adults living in such neighborhoods. Unemployed or underemployed, often receiving public assistance, these adults may be poor in financial resources but are rich in innate ability and life experience. They are ready and able to help solve some of society's human problems. To develop and use this latent talent and energy in the interest of both the student and the community remains a basic goal of the College.

The addition of a second year to the curriculum resulted directly from the expressed desire of students who had completed the first year and were both capable of and interested in continuing their education further. The first class of fifty second year students was enrolled in April, 1969. The admission of men to the College also began in 1969 on a small scale with most of them placed for training in the field of legal services.

*The Women's Talent Corps, Inc., was incorporated in the State of New York in March 1965.

SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE COLLEGE

Since its official inauguration in 1966, the College for Human Services has:

* Developed and implemented a "Human Services Core Curriculum."
* Trained over 500 persons for new professional positions at more than sixty public and private human service agencies.
* Created the following new professional positions in these agencies, many of which offer opportunities for further advancement:

Social Work Assistant	Occupational Therapy Assistant
Teacher Assistant	Recreational Therapy Assistant
Guidance Assistant	Community Health Assistant
Case Aide	Legal Services Assistant
Investigator	Health Assistant
Research Assistant	Interviewer

Community Liaison Trainee

* Developed, in conjunction with Columbia University Law School, the first program in the country involving a law school to train legal service assistants.
* Helped families reduce or eliminate their dependence on welfare payments. Of 179 graduates who answered a recent follow-up survey, 68 who had been welfare recipients at the time they entered the program responded to the survey. 62 or 94% are still employed.
* Persuaded the New York City Board of Education to employ Teacher and Guidance Assistants, to establish the Educational Assistant position, and to waive the high school diploma requirement for the first group of Talent Corps graduates hired.

The Board now employs several thousand community residents in this capacity.

* Worked with a variety of agencies; for example: Bellevue Hospital, Metropolitan Hospital, Memorial Hospital, Kings County Hospital, Bronx Comprehensive Child Care Unit, Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, Lincoln Hospital, Beth Israel Hospital, Headstart, Community Services Society, Florence Nightingale Nursing Home, Karen Horney Clinic, Greenleigh Associates, East Harlem Coalition, Reality House, Edwin Gould Services for Children, Legal Aid Society, Community Action for Legal Services, Housing and Development Administration, New York City Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Windham Services for Children, Elementary, Junior High, and High Schools, etc.

* Initiated development of experimental field curricula, in conjunction with field placement agencies, in the fields of day care and mental retardation.

STUDENTS

Students admitted to the College for Human Services bring with them a commitment to community service, and an understanding of the conditions and consequences of poverty gained from their own life experiences as low-income adults. Concern for other persons plus a strong motivation for training are of prime importance in their selection.

To matriculate at the College, students must live in New York City, be over 21 years of age and in good health, be able to read, write and do basic arithmetic, and have a poverty-level income as established by the United States Department of Labor, the major source of funds for the College for Human Services.

More than 2500 persons have applied for the 500 openings available since the Corps' inception in September 1966. The College recruits students largely through community groups and agencies, but many individuals also hear of it from friends, neighbors and from the mass media.

First-year students receive an educational scholarship from the College averaging $2.10 an hour, throughout the 36-week academic year. Second-year students, as regular employees of an agency, receive an annual salary from the agency for the 3 days per week that they work. They attend classes 2 days each week on a release-time basis, for which they are provided with a matching scholarship by the College.

FACULTY

The College for Human Services has drawn together a unique group of professionally trained faculty, most of whom perform dual roles as teachers in the classroom and coordinators and counselors in the field. They come from varied backgrounds in teaching, psychology, social work, the law, personnel or guidance counseling, or some other branch of the human services. Their working skills and professional experience provide the link between the College, the students and the agencies in the field.

The Coordinator-Teachers develop and implement, with student involvement, the interdisciplinary curriculum of the first year. Student participation is also encouraged in formulating the second-year program. They also impart job-related skills, serve as discussion leaders and resource persons, initiate and maintain contact with key supervisory staff in cooperating training agencies, and assist with the placement of students who have completed their training.

Additional faculty consists of lecturers in specific areas and of curriculum specialists and consultants brought in from time to time.

College for Human Services

CURRICULUM

The College's innovative work-study program integrates selected college-level material with practical field experience. All students, no matter what their job assignment, pursue the same basic course of study, which incorporates concepts from psychology, sociology, urban affairs, education and the communication arts into an interdisciplinary core curriculum. Students learn how to apply these concepts to problems encountered in the field.

Specifically, the College curriculum attempts to provide the student with a new perspective on the individual: his nature, his purposes in life, his value system and how his needs can best be met by the institutions of society. Far from being a discussion in the abstract, this emphasis on human values is extremely pragmatic, supplementing the student's field experiences and helping him to fulfill successfully his professional responsibilities, both present and future.

After a 2 - 4 week orientation period, first-year students divide their time between classes (two days a week) and field assignment (three days a week). Teaching takes place in small discussion groups, occasionally supplemented by large lecture sessions. Classes are taught by teaching teams with two faculty members responsible for each class of about 25 students.

Since many students lack high school diplomas, the College meets students where they are educationally, and works with them to overcome deficiencies. The College encourages the students to prepare for and take the high school equivalency examinations, helps them to improve their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

During the second year, open to students who have successfully completed the first year and who can obtain release time for education from the agencies in which they work, curricular emphasis is on concepts and principles related to the processes of human service. While the organization of the material has been somewhat more conventional than that used in the first year curriculum, modification is already in progress which will result in a more interdisciplinary program. The focus, however, remains on the practical applications of theory, using examples from the student's own experience on the job.

COMPLETION OF TRAINING

Those students who complete the first year of training are awarded a certificate of accomplishment. Second-year graduates qualify for the degree of Associate of Arts.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The United States Department of Labor provides funds for the College for Human Services under the Scheuer Amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act. Other financial support comes from the National Endowment for the Humanities, OEO, the Field Foundation, the New York Foundation, the Chase Manhattan Bank Foundation and the IBM Corporation.

Contributions to the College for Human Services are tax-deductible. It is a private independent educational institution exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The College for Human Services was charted by the Board of Regents of the State of New York in May 1970.

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